

# ***Great Tri-State Tornado Commemoration Event Planned***

Ryan J. Presley, Forecaster

1925 **Tri-State**<sup>TM</sup>  
**TORNADO**

75th ANNIVERSARY

The clash of air masses along a frontal boundary often leads to the formation of clouds and sometimes precipitation. If enough instability and moisture are present, thunderstorms become possible. Then, if all the key ingredients come together in just the right time and space, the most feared of all thunderstorm elements can develop—the killer tornado!

In the early afternoon hours of March 18, 1925, a severe thunderstorm formed over southeast Missouri. Eventually, a huge tornado—the Tri-State Tornado—developed from the mature thunderstorm. At times, this tornado was virtually unrecognizable—by all accounts a huge black wall of debris that caught local residents totally off-guard. How could they have known what was coming? After all, there was no organized warning system back then, and the storm was traveling at speeds over 60 MPH, barreling across southeast Missouri, southern Illinois, and southwest Indiana. In the aftermath, nearly 700 people had perished. Murphysboro, Illinois, alone, had over 230 fatalities, which is still considered the largest tornado disaster in U.S. history for a single community. In addition, thousands were injured or left homeless.

While it is inevitable that an event of such magnitude will strike the Paducah Forecast Area once again, it is almost as certain that the loss of life from a similar event would be substantially less today. After all, the science of meteorology has certainly evolved over the past 75 years. Now more than ever before, NWS forecasters have an overwhelming amount of data at their fingertips. With new AWIPS workstations, our forecasters can access the latest surface observations, upper-air and forecast model data, GOES satellite imagery, and Doppler radar algorithms to predict the severity of thunderstorms. Through NOAA Weather Radio, local broadcast media, and the Internet, warnings of such storms often reach the public in mere seconds after leaving our office.

However, meteorology is still an inexact science, and sometimes things just don't go as predicted. That's where you, our trained spotters, come in. Your timely reports are crucial to the warning process! Your ground-truth reports aid our forecasters in determining the validity of Doppler radar information and are oftentimes the deciding factor in issuing a warning. We, here at the National Weather Service in Paducah, are grateful for all the extra hours that you dedicate to our primary mission of saving lives.

As the new millennium approaches, our Tri-State Tornado Commemoration Team will continue to work closely with local, state, and national agencies to recognize the 75th anniversary of the Great Tri-State Tornado. This commemoration will span across many different mediums, ranging from a local commemoration event to the Year 2000's severe weather awareness campaigns, NOAA Weather Radio broadcasts, and even an Internet web site. We would like to invite you, our storm spotter team, to be a part of the commemoration ceremony, now scheduled for March 18, 2000 in Murphysboro, Illinois. Be sure to listen to NOAA Weather Radio or log on to our web site ([www.crh.noaa.gov/pah](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/pah)) as more details on the commemoration event unfold. We hope you'll seize this opportunity to join us in "*remembering the past to promote a safer tomorrow*"!

# Winter Weather Products Streamlined

WFO Paducah has streamlined its suite of winter weather products in order to more clearly relay winter weather hazards. The following is the streamlined set of products:

- Winter Weather Advisory*  
*Freezing Rain Advisory*
- Winter Storm Warning*  
*Ice Storm Warning*  
*Blizzard Warning*

A *Winter Weather Advisory* is issued for less than 4 inches of snow in 12 hours or less. A *Winter Storm Warning* is issued for 4 or more inches of snow in 12 hours or less.

A *Freezing Rain Advisory* is issued for less than 1/4 inch of ice accumulation. An *Ice Storm Warning* is issued for 1/4 inch or more of ice accumulation.

A *Blizzard Warning* is issued when falling or blowing snow frequently reduces visibilities to less than 1/4 mile combined with wind gusts of at least 35 MPH for at least 3 hours.

# Snowfall Reports - We Need Your Help!

When we think of spotter reports, we usually think of severe weather. However, snow and ice reports help us make better forecasts and keep everyone updated on snow and ice accumulation. So this winter season we would love to hear from you with the following reports:

- 1) When snowfall reaches 1 inch and every 1 to 2 inches thereafter, including a total.
- 2) The onset of ANY ice accumulation.

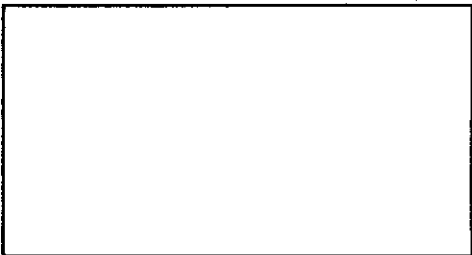
Use the unlisted spotter hotline (1-800 533-7189) to make your reports.

# Spotter Newsletter

National Weather Service  
8250 U.S. Highway 60  
West Paducah, KY 42086

Phone: (270) 744-6440

Web Site: [www.crh.noaa.gov/pah](http://www.crh.noaa.gov/pah)



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